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ABSTRACT

Career resource centers (CRCs), which are located in both educational settings and the workplace, provide information and services on planning a career and finding a job. CRCs offer information, materials, and services to individuals interested in career planning and development and are typically found in secondary and higher education institutions. Services provided by CRCs include the following: retrieving occupational and educational information; helping individuals use CRC resources; promoting thoughtful career planning, providing job placement and employability skills information; helping individuals assess their attitudes, interests, and aptitudes; and preparing individuals for life-role transitions. CRCs are commonly structured as a series of stations and are ideally staffed by professional, paraprofessional, and support staff trained in areas such as job placement, career planning, retrieval and dissemination of materials, counseling and personnel assessment, curriculum development, and community resource development and coordination. Print, nonprint, and computer-assisted materials should all be included in a CRC's collection of materials. Core CRC materials include directories of schools and nonschool-based programs at all instructional levels, materials on the job search process, occupational information, self-awareness materials, and information about the local job market and support groups. (Addresses of 25 resource material sources and 8 references are included.) (MN)

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

Career Resource Centers

by Judith O. Wagner

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Career resource centers (CRCs), located in many educational settings and in the workplace, provide information and services on planning a career and finding a job. Each CRC has its own mission and clientele, and the staff required, services offered, and materials included will vary depending on the purpose and audience of the particular center. This *ERIC Digest* focuses on establishing and operating a CRC and identifies sources of materials that would be appropriate for inclusion. It is an update of *ERIC Digest No. 7* (Marshall 1981), and a companion to *ERIC Digest No. 85* (Wagner 1989) and *ERIC Digest No. 121* (Wagner 1992).

What Is a Career Resource Center?

Career resource centers offer information, materials, and services to individuals interested in career planning and development. Centers are typically found in secondary, postsecondary, and higher education institutions. Businesses are beginning to see the value of career resource centers and are establishing them in the workplace. Companies that have created CRCs have noted such benefits as increasing employees' career development skills and knowledge, having employees make a greater commitment to their own career development, and reaching more employees than possible through seminars or individual counseling (Kaye et al. 1984).

Steps in Establishing a CRC

- Select a coordinator
- Secure administrative support
- Select steering committee
- Identify clientele
- Determine client needs
- Determine the most effective delivery system
- Decide how the CRC will meet those needs
- Prepare a detailed written statement of purpose
- Determine goals and objectives
- Prepare a detailed plan
- Ensure coordination with existing programs
- Investigate funding sources
- Encourage community and staff support
- Select staff
- Identify, evaluate, order materials
- Conduct orientation

(Boyle 1985; Marshall 1981)

Services of CRCs

Each career resource center will offer services appropriate to its clientele. Typical services include providing occupational and educational information; assisting individuals in using CRC resources; promoting thoughtful career planning and decision making; providing job placement and employability skills information; assisting individuals in assessing and understanding their attitudes, values, interests, and aptitudes; preparing individuals for life-role transitions; and offering seminars and workshops on various aspects of the career development process (Marshall 1981).

Center Organization

Of the several models for organizing a career resource center, a usable and common device is the station concept, whereby materials with a common focus are grouped together. Clients begin at an orientation station that outlines the career development process and motivates those who may be skeptical. At the next station, individuals use inventories to help them understand what they value about work, how personal interests translate into work interests, and identify the skills and abilities they already possess. At another station, participants complete forms that help them perceive how others see them. Finally, individuals find alternatives for career development within an organization by using such resources as organizational charts, department descriptions, and job skill requirement lists.

Staffing the Center

Ideally, CRC staff will be a diverse group of professional, paraprofessional, and support staff that might include a coordinator, a placement specialist, a career information specialist, counselors, and a work study coordinator. In reality, a single person or several part-time people often perform these functions. It is important that staff can perform such duties as–

- Identification, collection, selection, and processing of materials
- Retrieval and dissemination of materials
- Counseling and personal assessment
- Job placement
- Curriculum development
- Community resource development and coordination.

Materials Selection

Once materials have been identified, established selection criteria should be used to choose those materials that are most appropriate for a particular center. A variety of types of materials–print, nonprint, and computer assisted–should be included in the collection. Selection criteria include price, reading level, appropriateness, accuracy, balance, user appeal, applicability, comprehensiveness, and absence of sex and racial bias.

Core Materials

Certain resources belong in every career resource center. Selection will depend upon the purpose and clientele of the center. Types of materials to include are–

- Directories of secondary schools, two-year and four-year institutions, home study courses, certificate programs, professional associations, and trade and technical schools
- Materials on all steps in the job search process–locating employers, resumes, cover letters, networking, job application, interviewing, and follow-up
- Materials pertaining particularly to the career needs of women, minorities, special needs groups, government jobs, and the military, including information about financial aid and scholarships
- Occupational information about specific careers and jobs including details regarding job entry requirements, working conditions, salary and benefits, duties, advancement opportunities, occupational opportunities, and supply and demand
- Self-awareness materials that help users examine attitudes and values, encourage positive outlooks, and improve interpersonal and employability skills
- Information about the local job market and support groups

Sources for Materials

Information about additional sources can be found in the public library.

ACT Educational Programs
4480 North Shallowford Road, F276
Atlanta GA 30338
(Software)

Bob Adams, Inc
260 Center Street
Holbrook MA 02343
(Print)

America Media Inc
4900 University Avenue
West Des Moines IA 50266-6769
800/262-2557
(AV)

Career Design Software
PO Box 95624
Atlanta GA 30347
404/321-6100
(Software)

Career Development Software Inc.
2501 Southeast Columbia Way
Vancouver WA 98661
206/696-3529
(Software)

Career Press
180 Fifth Avenue
Hawthorne NJ 07507
(Print)

CareerTrack Publications
3085 Center Green Drive
PO Box 18778
Boulder CO 80308-1778
800/334-1018
FAX:800/622-6211
(AV)

Careerware
1319 Spruce Street
Boulder CO 80302
303/449-1631
(Software)

Chronicle Guidance Publications
PO Box 1190
Moravia NY 13118-1190
800/622-7284
(Print, software)

COIN
3361 Executive Parkway
Suite 302
Toledo OH 43606
(Software)

Gale Research
835 Penobscot Building
Detroit MI 48226-4094
(Print)

Garrett Park Press
PO Box 190M
Garrett Park MD 20896
(Print)

Impact Publications
9104-N Manassas Drive
Manassas Park VA 22111-5211
703/361-7300
FAX:703/335-9486
(Print, AV, Software)

JIST Works
720 North Park Avenue
Indianapolis IN 46202-3431
(Print)

Macmillan New Media
124 Mount Auburn Street
Cambridge MA 02138
617/661-2955
(Software)

MCE Inc/Division of Lawrence Productions
50 Gilbert Road
Belmont MA 02178
617/484-9457
(Software)

Micromash
6402 South Troy Circle
Englewood CO 80111
303/799-0099
(Software)

National Career Information Systems
1787 Agate Street
Eugene OR 97403-5214
503/346-3872
(Software)

National Data Center
640 North LaSalle Street
Chicago IL 60610
800/828-0422
(Software)

New Careers Center
1515 23rd Street
PO Box 339-UJ
Boulder CO 80306
800/634-9024
FAX:303/447-8684
(print, AV, software)

Peterson's Guides
202 Carnegie Center
PO Box 2123
Princeton NJ 08543-2123
(Print, software)

Riverside Publishing Company
2550 Beckleymeade Avenue
Suite 125, LB-14
Dallas TX 75237
800/442-8855
(Software)

Ten Speed Press
PO Box 7123
Berkeley CA 94707
(Print)

VGM Career Horizons
4255 West Touhy Avenue
Lincolnwood IL 60646-1975
(Print)

Vocational Biographies
PO Box 31
Sauk Centre MN 56378-0031
(Print)

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